

A National Forum

Funding POST Organizations to Meet Modern Challenges & Problem Based Learning in a POST Environment

Police officer standards and training (POST) organizations are being held increasingly more accountable to improve the performance of law enforcement officers, from that of the entry-level rookie officer to the seasoned veteran. Law enforcement first responders stand at the front line of modern public safety from the challenges of crime to homeland security. Despite a near unanimous consensus in support of enhancing law enforcement capabilities, hard realities consistently impede progress. Many POST organizations today labor under funding models that date back to the organization's inception thirty to forty years ago. Likewise, the preparation and continued development of law enforcement personnel is conducted with training delivery methodologies that may benefit from improvement.

The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) and the IADLEST Central Region will be hosting a forum to examine these issues in Lansing, Michigan on December 5 and 6, 2006. The intent of the forum is to share best practices in both of these subjects. The forum will bring together experts from across the country who have demonstrated success in the two subjects.

➤ **Problem Based Learning** Nationwide, law enforcement educators and trainers are experimenting with problem-based learning (PBL) as a viable training delivery methodology. The federal government and several state standards-setting agencies have endorsed and are moving forward with this approach, as well. PBL is an attempt to develop higher thinking competencies (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) simultaneously with basic knowledge acquisition. PBL calls for a shift in thinking to a more qualitative approach to training.

The MCOLES has been moving police training in Michigan in the direction of PBL and is facilitating this forum on "PBL in a POST Environment". A primary focus is what role should state POST organizations play? Issues such as how trainers can best evaluate student learning and progress in a PBL environment and how can instructors accurately measure decision making and problem solving will be discussed.

We are encouraging all states to bring any staff member who is working on PBL or is responsible for curriculum development or performance assessment. We will also have presentations by individuals from states that have already implemented some PBL training.

➤ **Funding POST Organizations** Every POST agency has had problems with ups and downs in funding at various times in the agency's history. During the recently passed recession, most POST agencies went the way of their state government when the squeeze was put on the state budget. In fact that has been the history of many POSTs during their life.

Does it have to be that way? Some states would say "no," because they have been able to identify funding through dedicated sources that are not subject to the wild fluctuations of general funding and the legislative appropriation process. Several states have had success with this problem and they have indicated a willingness to share their thoughts and ideas with you.

This forum will examine funding sources that will provide steady funding and strategies to secure and keep the funding. We will explore legislative strategies to secure funding and current efforts on the funding front by attendees. The intent will be to identify best practices and strategies that can be taken back to your state to address this critical issue.

Conference Details The forum will run from 10 A.M. on Tuesday, December 5th, and conclude about 3 P.M. on Wednesday, December 6th. The Radisson Hotel will host the forum. This hotel is located in downtown Lansing, convenient to the capitol, restaurants, and other entertainment venues. The hotel is only a short ride from Lansing's Capitol City Airport.

Your hosts for this forum are Steve Schierholt, Executive Director, Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy and Regional Representative of the IADLEST Central Region and Ray Beach, Executive Director, Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards.

For additional information, please call MCOLES at (517) 322-1417, or visit the MCOLES Website at www.MCOLES.org.